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Preferences for Male or Female Counselors as Related to Student-Counselee Sex, Grade Level, Type of Presenting Concern and Self-Esteem

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PREFERENCES FOR MALE OR FEMALE COUNSELORS AS RELATED TO STUDENT-COUNSELEE SEX, GRADE LEVEL, TYPE OF PRESENTING CONCERN AND SELF-ESTEEM

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ABSTRACT

Problem

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the selected variables of student-counselee--sex, grade level, and self-esteem--and the preference for a male or a female counselor by types of presenting concerns.

Procedure

The subjects of this study consisted of 375 students, 189 males and 186 females, enrolled in a junior-senior high school in a rural community in Northcentral Minnesota. The subjects were all adolescents in grades seven through twelve, inclusive. The sample size for each grade level ranged from a minimum of sixty to a maximum of sixty-nine.

The instruments used in this study were a personal data questionnaire and the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory.

The statistical tests employed included multiple regression analysis, chi square and canonical correlation. The .05 level of confidence was used, where applicable, to evaluate the significance of the obtained results.

Findings

The major findings of this study were as follows:

1. There was a significant difference in the preference for a male or a female counselor by type of presenting concern and the

sex of the student-counselee. A preference existed for a female counselor by both sexes for the concern areas of health-physical, home-school, boy-girl, moral-religious, and personal-social, while a preference existed for a male counselor for the school and vocational-educational concern areas. Significant proportional differences of males and females in counselor choice existed in all concern areas except for the school concern area, where no significant difference was found.

2. There was no significant relationship between the preference for a male or a female counselor by type of presenting concern and the grade level of the student-counselee.

3. There was no significant relationship between the preference for a male or a female counselor when type of presenting concern and the self-esteem of the student-counselee were considered.

4. There were significant relationships between the first set of variables measuring student-counselee presenting concerns and the second set of variables of student-counselee sex, grade level, age and self-esteem. Health-physical concerns from the first set and sex of the student-counselee from the second set contributed most to the canonical correlation.

Conclusions

Female counselors were preferred for all personal-social concern areas and male counselors were preferred for school and vocational-educational concerns with that preference increasing with each succeeding grade. In addition, self-esteem was not found to be an important

variable in determining counselor preference. An additional conclusion was that student-counselee sex and the health-physical concern made the most important contribution to the canonical correlation.

Finally, it was suggested that rising social consciousness may have altered stereotypic perceptions of women's roles as evidenced by the preference for a female counselor for all personal and social concern areas.

Recommendations

Several recommendations were offered for further research to promote a better understanding of preferences for male or female counselors.

1. A replication of the study was recommended using other populations to determine if the results of this study may be generalized.

2. It was recommended that the self-esteem variable be explored in conjunction with the preference for a male or a female counselor where students have actually made a counselor choice.

3. It was further recommended that school boards hire female counselors, in appropriate numbers, in order to allow for choice by student-counselees.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Sex role conditioning in the adolescent's past and present has an impact on self-perception and upon perceptions of others. Evidence of sex differentiation and sex-role stereotyping is abundantly present in the literature (Burns, 1977; Doherty, 1973; Hoffman, 1977; Maslin & Davis, 1975; Smith, M. L., 1973; Tavris & Offir, 1977).

Wylie (1961), in a critical examination of research literature about the self-concept, affirmed that the existence of sex-role stereotypes has been well documented since early Greek and Roman times. Rosenkrantz, Vogel, Bee, Broverman, and Broverman (1968) offered the concept that sex-role stereotypes may have originated from physiological differences centering around strength and childbirth. In their study females were found to be superior in tasks relating to alertness, rapid shifts in attention, and perceptual speed and accuracy. Maccoby (1966) found men superior in visual and spatial ability and mathematics. Culture, then, capitalizes upon these differences by sex-typing of occupations which reflects and perpetuates the differential status of males and females (Schlossberg & Goodman, 1972).

Bem (1975), in her study of masculine and feminine roles, stated that men are afraid to do anything associated with a female role and women are afraid to try to compete in a man's world.

Moreover, stereotypically masculine traits are more often perceived as socially desirable than are attributes which are stereotypically female. Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson and Rosenkrantz (1972) found that positively valued masculine characteristics form a cluster entailing competence and that positively valued feminine traits reflect warmth and expressiveness. Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, and Vogel (1970) found that females have more negative self-concepts than males because of the lower values placed on feminine characteristics. This tendency to devalue femininity was also demonstrated in a study by Abramowitz, Abramowitz, Jackson, and Gomes (1973). Jones, Chernovetz, and Hansson (1978) further claimed that women would prefer to become more masculine. In a study relating the effect of perceptions of self and others on personal adjustment, Deutsch and Gilbert (1976) found that in our society masculinity was perceived as healthy for both sexes and femininity unhealthy.

For the adolescent, the striving for identity based on sex-role concepts regarding the real self, the ideal self and what they believe the other sex desires is beset by feelings of self-worth. Rogers (1951) has stated that a positive emotional tone toward the self seems to exist when the self structure is firmly organized and a negative self-feeling exists when experiences occur which are incongruent with the self-structure. These feelings, according to Wells and Marwell (1976), have an affective component termed by Rogers as self-acceptance and is determined to be synonymous with self-esteem. Self-esteem is defined as the extent to which an individual feels himself to be worthwhile, significant and successful (Coopersmith, 1967).

Rosenberg (1965) described levels of self-esteem in the following terms:

> High self-esteem expresses the feeling that one is "good enough." The individual simply feels he is a person of worth, he respects himself for what he is. Low self-esteem, on the other hand, implies self-rejection, self-dissatisfaction, self-contempt (p. 31).

In summary, the difficulty and the complexity of the adolescent period based on a striving for identity and self-esteem, and problems encountered in sex-role bias and sex-role stereotyping form the background of the problem.

Statement of the Problem

In choosing a counselor, the client's stereotypic perceptions of counselor attitudes, functions and abilities in the counseling relationship may play a crucial role. Moreover, as suggested by Fabrikant (1974), during childhood the need for a model for identification may also be a contributing factor in counselor preference. As the striving for identification develops, feelings of self-worth or self-esteem are necessarily a by-product. Self-esteem, then, may become an important component in determining preference for a male or female counselor.

Numerous studies, among which are those by Fuller (1964), McQuary (1964) and Boulware and Holmes (1970), have indicated a preference for a male counselor by both male and female clients. However, the feminist movement has challenged all the traditional stereotypes and standards of female behavior (Simons and Helms, 1976). Therefore, there appears to be a need to reexamine counselor preferences in light of the women's movement.

The problem investigated in this study was: When given a choice of counselor preference, by sex, will there be a difference in preference by male and female high school students based on the student's: (1) sex; (2) grade level; (3) type of presenting concern; and (4) self-esteem?

The types of presenting concerns are classified into the following categories:

1. Health and Physical Development
2. School
3. Home and Family
4. Boy and Girl Relationships
5. Vocational and Educational
6. Moral and Religious
7. Personal-Social

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to provide basic information about the preferences of high school students for male and female counselors in view of the increased awareness of sex-role conditioning, sex-role bias and sex-role standards.

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the preference for a male or a female counselor by type of presenting concern and the sex of the student-counselee.

2. There is no significant relationship between the preference for a male or a female counselor by type of presenting concern and the grade level of the student-counselee.

3. There is no significant relationship between the preference for a male or a female counselor when type of presenting concern and the self-esteem of the student-counselee are considered.

4. There are no significant relationships between the first set of the variables measuring student-counselee presenting concerns and the second set of variables of student-counselee sex, grade level, age and self-esteem.

Limitations/Delimitations

The study is limited to the validity and reliability of the questionnaire administered to the students and of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) (Coopersmith, 1967). It is further limited by the truthfulness of student responses.

The study is delimited to the characteristics of the sample. All subjects were adolescents in grades seven to twelve, inclusive, of a junior-senior high school in a rural community in Northcentral Minnesota. It is, also, delimited by the sample size of sixty students, who were nearly equally divided between males and females, in each grade level.

Many factors may influence preferences for male or female counselors. This study is delimited by the four factors of: (1) student sex; (2) student grade level; (3) type of presenting concern; (4) the self-esteem of the student counselee.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the major terms are operationally defined as follows:

High school students refers to students in grades seven to twelve, inclusive.

Sex-role stereotyping refers to characteristics ascribed to an individual based on a presumed knowledge of a group of which he is a member.

Sex-role standard refers to the sum of socially designated behavior that differentiates males and females.

Sex-role bias refers to prejudicial ideas based on sex-role stereotyping.

Self-esteem is defined as scores obtained on the SEI. High scores indicate high esteem. It is further defined as a component of the self-concept.

Health and physical development concerns refer to such problems as: being overweight, having a poor complexion or skin problems, not being very attractive physically.

School concerns refer to such problems as: not spending enough time in study, not liking school, worrying about grades.

Home and family concerns refer to such problems as: parents not understanding, parents separated or divorced, wanting love and affection.

Boy and girl relationship concerns refer to such problems as: not mixing well with the opposite sex, being afraid of close contact with the opposite sex, going with someone not accepted by the family.

Vocational and educational concerns refer to such problems as: wanting advice on what to do after high school, wanting to earn money, not knowing own desires as far as a career is concerned.

Moral and religious concerns refers to such problems as: being tempted to cheat in class, doubting the value of church and prayer, sometimes lying without meaning to.

Personal-social concerns refers to such problems as: lacking self-confidence, becoming embarrassed too easily, difficulty in developing friendships, problems in getting along with others, moodiness.

Organization of the Study

Chapter II contains the review of related literature. First, selected research on the variables of client sex, grade level, and type of presenting concern as related to client preference for a male or female counselor are presented. Second, an overview of research on self-esteem and a description of the Coopersmith SEI along with evaluative studies of that instrument are made. Chapter III includes a discussion of the methods and procedures of the study including a description of the population, data collection procedures, instrumentation, and a description of the statistical analysis of the data. Chapter IV lists the findings of the study. In Chapter V, the findings are discussed and recommendations are offered.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Overview

The first section of this chapter is a review of some of the major studies which focus on client choice, based on sex, and sex-role stereotyping. The second section reviews research data about client choice as related to grade level (age) of the client. The third section examines the interaction of client choice based on type of presenting concern. The fourth section contains selected studies on self-esteem. The final section is comprised of a description of the Coopersmith SEI and evaluative studies of that instrument.

Client-Choice of Counselor and Sex-Role Stereotyping

Rosen (1967) stated that the area of research receiving little attention in light of its potential influence is the preference for counselors based on certain characteristics of the counselor. In fact, the study of certain kinds of preferences seemed to be, according to him, taboo. These characteristics included such variables as race, ethnic origin, marital status, age, sex and behavior in the clinical setting. These attributes may influence whether potential clients actually seek counseling.

The possible effects of stereotyping by sex have come to the fore recently as a concern in the helping professions. Charges have

been raised that stereotyping is psychologically damaging and serves to limit the human development of both males and females (Maslin and Davis, 1975). Clinicians are suggesting that healthy women differ from healthy men by being more submissive, less independent, less adventuresome, less objective, more easily influenced, less aggressive, less competitive, more excitable in minor crises, more conceited about their appearance and having their feelings hurt more easily (Broverman et al., 1972). Sex differences in socialization experiences reflect adult role expectations that females will be mothers and males will be workers (Hoffman, 1977).

Masculine characteristics are the clinical standard for mental health (Broverman et al., 1972). The psychologists' tendency to define human as male reflects the tendency to conceptualize the masculine-feminine polarity in an unidimensional fashion as other psychological polarities (Doherty, 1973). Bem (1975) stated: "In American Society men are supposed to be masculine; women are supposed to be feminine, and neither sex is supposed to be much like the other" (p. 59).

Tyler (1947) stated that human beings classify their fellow men in all sorts of ways. One of these ways has to do with the individual's attitudes toward the sexes. She stated that it is inevitable that this classification is the most universal and obvious one the child meets and that he/she naturally develops general conceptions of what men are like and what women are like. Since a counselor must be either a man or a woman some of the client's feelings about sex, she affirmed, must color the counseling relationship.

The results of a study by Freeman and Stormes (1977) serves to emphasize this concept. Their research indicated that clients are more

willing to accept negative feedback about themselves when they receive it from a person of the same sex, which lends support to the pairing of client and counselor on the basis of gender. A study by Petro and Hansen (1977) inquired into the effects of sex-pairings on affective sensitivity. Their study provides no support for the espoused benefits of pairing female clients and female counselors. However, a study by Saltzstein and Ast (1977) examining the influence of males and females on the psychophysical judgments of females, found females were more influenced by same-sexed pairings. Whalen and Flowers (1977) determined that same-sex pairings elicited more interpretation than opposite sex-pairings. Their study was based upon a construct of perceived social similarity. Ziemelis (1974) found that the matching of clients with counselors on the basis of preference level, produced a slight but consistent effect on both the client's and the counselor's evaluation of the counseling process and outcome.

Worby (1955), in a study of two groups of high school juniors in Rochester, New York, found a preference for a helping person of the same sex and at least nine years older. Koile and Bird (1956), in a study at East Texas University found, as did Tyler (1947), that counseling services are organized on the basic assumption that girls prefer to talk to women and boys prefer to talk to men. Koile and Bird's (1956) findings revealed that: Male freshmen preferred a male counselor on far more problems than they preferred a female counselor; and women freshmen preferred a woman counselor on more problems than they preferred a male. In addition, the proportionate number of problems on which women were willing to consult a man was greater than the

proportionate number on which men were willing to consult a woman. Each sex seemed to prefer a same-sex counselor with men being more partial to their own sex.

McQuary (1964), in a free written response to describe counselor characteristics preferred by graduate students, found, in addition to a calm, pleasant voice, there was a five to two preference for a male counselor over a female counselor. Fuller (1963), at the University of Texas, had difficulty finding students who preferred female counselors. A second study by Fuller (1964) examined whether counseling center clients had counselor preferences based on sex, whether such preferences varied with client sex and presenting problem, and whether such preference changed after counseling. Her findings showed that both males and females preferred male counselors more than they preferred female counselors, and that preferences for male counselors were more stable than preferences for female counselors. Boulware and Holmes' (1970) study agreed with Fuller's findings. Christensen and Magoon (1974), in a perceived hierarchy of help-giving sources for two categories of student problems, also found that male counselors were preferred over female counselors.

Allen, Sipes and Sipes (1977), in an autokinetic illusion experiment involving female graduate students who were randomly assigned to one group with a female experimenter and one group with a male experimenter, found results to be better with the same-sex experimenter. Walsh and Schallow (1977) found traditional stereotypical differences were most accentuated when male and female subjects were crossed with a task oriented experimenter of the opposite

sex. Using a sorting task with supportive statements to discover if performance increased when tested by the same sex or by the opposite sex, Stevenson and Allen (1964) also found that the general level of performance was higher when tested by a member of the opposite sex. This study was cited as being contrary to studies done with children where the level of performance remained unchanged. In a study by Stevenson (1977), he again found that opposite sex experimenters were more potent social reinforcers and that subjects performed better in a sorting task when tested by opposite sex experimenters. Geer and Hurst (1976) randomly assigned students who scored at the eightieth percentile or above on a test anxiety survey to treatment and control groups. Their study showed that male counselors employing desensitization obtained significantly better results with female clients than did female counselors with female clients. Franks (1969), in an extensive review of literature about desensitization, however, refutes this finding by stating that there is no suggestion of differential response according to the sex of the counselor based on studies conducted by some ninety counselors. Janda and Rimm (1977) examined the type of situation and the sex of the counselor in assertiveness training. They found that subjects seen by a male counselor changed significantly more than subjects seen by a female counselor. They concluded that perhaps sex of the counselor plays an important role only in relatively brief and/or highly structured counseling approaches such as assertive training and systematic desensitization. However, Stebbins, Kelly, Tolor and Power (1977) found that men and women assert themselves more readily with members of the same sex.

In spite of Rosen's (1967) contention that ethnic background, marital status, and religion are areas of research that are taboo, many studies have dealt with these issues since then. Stranges and Riccio (1970), in a study determining whether counselees with different racial and ethnic backgrounds preferred to be counseled by counselors with different backgrounds, found that northern white trainees at the Adult Education and School Services Center at the Columbus, Ohio, Public Schools preferred a black female counselor over a northern white male, a black male, an Appalachian white female, a northern white male, or an Appalachian white male. Riccio and Barnes (1973) were concerned with the extent to which senior high school students employ constructs of race, subculture, and sex in establishing counselor preferences. This study took place in a comprehensive high school in Columbus, Ohio. The subjects were sixty American blacks, sixty Appalachian whites, and sixty northern whites. There were thirty males and thirty females in each group. Subjects viewed pictures of counselors (one male and one female) representing each racial-cultural background. They were then asked to make a counselor selection. No significant differences in the counselor selection existed within the northern white and Appalachian white study groups, but forty-two of the sixty blacks in the study group selected a male counselor. The observed frequency was significant beyond the .01 level of confidence.

Grantham (1973) tested the hypothesis that greater counselor-subject's compatibility in race, sex, and language results in greater client satisfaction and depth of exploration. The subjects were

thirty-seven black students and their counselors in a special program for disadvantaged at a leading eastern state university. The results indicated a preference for black counselors to a significantly greater degree than for white counselors. However, there was greater in-depth exploration of feelings with female counselors.

In examining overall preferences for counselors using race, sex, and ethnic origin as determiners, Pinchot, Riccio and Peters (1975) found in their study of 180 sixth grade students and their parents that sex of the counselor was a major variable for the parents and the girls but not one for the boys. Boys appeared not to have a significant priority for either a male or a female counselor. Further results showed a preference for a female counselor if only one counselor was available in the school. This can be basically due to the client's perception of an older woman as a mother figure (Hanson, Stevic & Warner, 1972).

Fabrikant (1974) observed:

> There has been exploration of the advantages of the patient having a male or female therapist, depending on the parental figure considered to be the focus of difficulty. The assumption seems to be that the sex of the patient is less important than the sex of the therapist. The therapist of choice for young children was usually a female on the assumption that the mother figure is more important to the child in early years. Later in childhood and particularly for the male child, the male therapist becomes more important. The explanation was that the male child needed a male model with whom to identify (p. 83).

Simons and Helms (1976) examined preferences for counselors differing in marital status, sex, and age in a two-part study. Study group one consisted of thirty-two female undergraduates. Group two consisted of thirty-two non-college women. Through a two x two x four

split-plot analysis of variance with two levels of marital status, two levels of counselor sex and four age groupings, their findings showed that both college and non-college women preferred female counselors to male counselors on a number of hypothetical process measures.

Chesler (1971) conducted a study involving marital status, religious affiliation, homosexual or heterosexual preference, and therapist preference by sex with 1,001 clinic outpatients (536 women and 465 men) who sought therapy in New York between 1965 and 1969. Almost three-fourths of these were under thirty, and two-thirds were single. Her sample consisted only of those patients who voluntarily stated a preference for the therapist by sex, or who voluntarily stated they had no preference at the time of the initial interview. Her results indicated an overwhelming preference for male therapists.

Preference for a same-sexed or an opposite sexed counselor may be reflected by the level of client self-disclosure. Numerous studies have centered upon the effect of counselor sex on client self-disclosure.

Hoffman and Spence's (1977) study of level of self-disclosure based on interviewer and subject sex failed to reveal any significant effects due to same sexed or opposite sexed pairings. Janofsky (1971) researched affective self-disclosure in telephone versus face-to-face interviews and concluded that females disclosed more than males in either situation. Brooks (1973) studied the inter-action effects of client and counselor sex and counselor status on self-disclosure. A two x two x two analysis of variance revealed: (1) Males disclosed more to females, while females disclosed more to males; and (2) Dyads containing a female resulted in more disclosure than all male dyads.

Fuller (1963) found female clients generally to be more likely than male clients to express feelings, but no significant difference in feeling expressed by clients was found to be due to counselor sex. She also discerned that client-counselor pairs which contained a female, regardless of whether the female was a client or a counselor, produced more self-disclosure than all male dyads. Hill (1975) found that same sex pairings had more discussion of feeling, both by the counselor and the client. Like Fuller (1963) and Hebert (1968), she found that female subjects paired with female counselors produced more discussion than mixed dyads.

Scher (1975) examined the contribution of client and counselor verbal activity, client and counselor sex, and counselor experience to satisfaction and symptom relief. Neither counselor sex nor client sex was found to be a significant predictor of counseling success.

At the Hebrew University Student Counseling Services, Jerusalem, Israel, Dreman (1977) conducted a study with 100 university students as subjects. It was concluded that both non-client and actual clients preferred an active rather than a passive counselor. The client population preferred more counselor activity in the area of cognitive change.

There are many conflicting points of view in the literature about the value of same-sexed or mixed dyads, as well as whether the composition of groups should be all-male, all-female, or mixed. Annis and Perry, in a recent study (1977), found no significant difference in self-disclosure in any of the three ways of grouping which may or may not have implications for the dyadic counseling relationship. Tanney and Birk (1976) stated that most counselors and therapists are men and most consumers of psychological services are women. They affirmed that:

> Empirical evidence of female client preferences for same sex or other sexed counselor is sparse. Research studying the impact of pairing client and counselor on the basis of sexual similarity is uncommon as well. Where research does exist, frequently the results are contradictory and confusing due to the selection of different instruments (p. 29).

However, Fabrikant (1974) stated: "the general consensus seems to be that although most patients seeking treatment are women, they seem to prefer men to women as therapists" (p. 86). Stickler (1977) feels the sex of the therapist and the sex of the client may be meaningful on an individual basis, but there is no evidence of an across-the-board effect. However, Orlinsky and Howard (1975) found same-sex dyads to be more satisfactory in the therapy relationship.

Billingsley (1977) suggested that client sex is not important in determining treatment goals or that client sex may affect therapists' treatment goal choice when pathology is vague or nonsevere. Studies done by Feister (1977), and Persons, Persons and Newmark (1974) agreed that there was no evidence that therapist sex was an important influence in correlates of counselor effectiveness. Hoffman-Graff (1977), as a result of her study of positive and negative self-disclosure, and interview-subject sex pairings, suggested that:

> Despite the body of literature that would indicate to the contrary, interviewer and subject sex did not result in any significant differences. There are several possible explanations of these results. The majority of research on counselor sex effects has simply asked clients to state their preferences or perceptions of male and female counselors, or in other words, to indicate how they think they will respond. Clearly, people do not respond as they think they will (p. 189).

In conclusion, the literature indicates a preference for male counselors by both sexes. However, the research also points out that often same-sexed pairings have been beneficial. Freeman and Stormes

(1977), and Rice and Rice (1973), proposed that women could utilize female counselors more effectively than male counselors. Tanney and Birk (1976), furthermore, imply that the rising social consciousness created by the feminist movement may create among women clients a greater demand for women counselors and therapists.

Client-Choice as Related to Grade Level (Age)

In spite of the fact that Kopel (1972) stressed the greater importance of both sex and age than understanding and competence in the counseling interaction, there appears to be a dirth of literature concerning age as a variable. Erikson (1963) expressed a concern that there was minimal attention given to this parameter. He affirmed that persons of different ages have different characteristics and crisis points. This author, also, found lack of studies on either age or grade level to be the case.

It would appear, from the literature that does exist, that there is a marked preference by younger students for females as counselors and/or experimenters. McMahan (1976) observed a preference for first grade students for a female experimenter in completing a task in conservation acquisition. Bradbury, Wright, Walker and Ross (1975), in an examination of performance on the Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) as a function of sex of experimenter, sex of subject, and age of subject, found that subjects, aged six to eight, performed better for females, while subjects, aged nine to eleven performed better for males, and those aged twelve to fifteen performed well for either sex. This study may have implications for client-counselor pairings.

For older students there appears to be more divergence of opinion. Kopel (1972) used an adjective check list with upper-division psychology students at the University of Texas to rate preference for four sets of therapists on a nine-point scale. The therapists included an older man and woman and a younger man and woman. His hypothesis of preference for an older male was borne out. Howard, Orlinsky and Hill (1970), in a study with 118 female patients whose median age was 26, and 18 male and 9 female therapists whose median age was 36, found age not to be as important in satisfaction derived from psychotherapy as the similarity of personal characteristics (i.e., marital status, employment). Worby (1955), examining adolescent expectations of how a potentially helpful person would act, discerned a preference for a helping person of the same sex and at least nine years older.

In an analogue study relating the effects of model age and model sex on the psychological modeling of selected college women, Bush (1976) found that the age of a teacher has a strong impact on the degree of knowledge acquired by female undergraduate students. Holman (1955) and Levy and Iscoe (1963) reported that both males and females prefer an older, rather than a younger therapist for both personal and vocational problems. Holman found that older counselors were preferred because the subjects expected that these individuals would give the type of help they wanted. Levy and Iscoe (1963) found that preferences were determined by the therapist's appearance, expectancies about how the therapist would act during therapy, and expectancies about the therapist's personal adjustment.

One study that does consider grade level and counselor preference was done by Mezzano (1971). The purpose of this study was to

discover whether clients seeking counseling do have preferences regarding the sex of the counselor, and whether such preferences vary with client age and presenting problem. The population for this study consisted of 1,495 students enrolled in grades 7 through 12 in the public schools of 3 communities located in close proximity in east-central Wisconsin. A questionnaire designed for this study was based on problem areas of the Mooney Problem Check List and was administered to the students during regular class periods by their classroom teachers. The completed questionnaires, with no identification of student indicated, were analyzed and the results tabulated so they were available for the boys and girls at each grade level from seven through twelve. The method of analysis was accomplished in two ways: (1) A ranking of each area of concern in order of importance; and (2) A percentage rating of students preferring a male or female counselor in each area of concern. The results of the study were as follows: (1) Seventh grade boys ranked concerns about home and family as the highest in importance, followed by concerns about their educational and vocational future. A majority indicated a preference for a male counselor; (2) Seventh grade girls were more concerned with their health and physical development. Their preference was for a female counselor; (3) Eighth grade boys were most concerned about school and their future. They preferred a male counselor; (4) Eighth grade girls ranked concerns about health and physical development highest in importance. They, as had seventh grade girls, preferred a female counselor; (5) Ninth grade boys were most concerned about the future and vocational-educational plans. A majority of them preferred a male counselor; (6) Ninth grade girls were most

concerned with their future and with school. Here their preference changed to include a male counselor, for their two most important concerns, and preference for a female counselor for their other concerns; (7) Tenth grade boys were most concerned about their future and school. A majority preferred a female counselor to discuss home and family relationships, and a male counselor for all others; (8) Tenth grade girls ranked concerns about their educational future highest in importance. A majority preferred to discuss school, future, and moral-religious concerns with a male counselor, while preferring a female counselor in other areas of concern; (9) Eleventh grade boys ranked future concerns as being of greatest importance to them. In all cases they preferred a male counselor; (10) Eleventh grade girls were most concerned with their future plans. A majority preferred to discuss school and future plans with a male counselor, and preferred a female counselor in their other areas of concern; (11) Twelfth grade boys ranked their future as most important. A majority preferred to discuss their concerns with a male counselor, with one except: they preferred a female counselor for home and family concerns; (12) Twelfth grade girls were most concerned about their educational and vocational future. A majority preferred to discuss school, educational and vocational future, and moral-religious concerns with a male counselor, while preferring a female counselor for other areas of concern.

A study by Hill, Tanney, Leonard and Reiss (1977) showed inconsistency in results of age of client and sex of counselor across problem types, indicating there are no clear-cut effects. This analysis, however, may be too simplistic. Simons and Helms (1976) suggested

that previous studies had required subjects to choose either a male or a female counselor, but when age and sex of counselors were taken into account, they found that female college students did not evaluate the counselor on the basis of sex alone, but were influenced by a combination of counselor age and sex. A preference was indicated for female counselors in the thirty-five to forty-five age range over those aged forty-five to fifty-five, and, moreover, a preference for counselors in age brackets fifty-five to sixty-five over those in age brackets forty-five to fifty-five was indicated.

It would appear that counselor credibility is due in part to counselor age and/or sex with older male counselors portraying the stereotypic fatherly image of having more knowledge of career areas, school and vocational-educational concerns. Younger students appear to cling to the stereotype of the female for emotional support, and for a substitute mother figure. The examination of the effects of sexism in counseling could be flawed if research is based on the assumption that all members of one sex behave equivalently (Hill et al., 1977). Age and/or grade level, in summary, appears to be in need of more research data.

Client Choice and Type of Presenting Concern

The purposes of coming for counseling apparently affect the client's expectations of the counselor. Bordin (1955) reported that the client who seeks information tends not to place so much importance on the personal characteristics of the counselor. However, the clients who expected to talk about themselves and personal problems were more inclined to see the personal characteristics of the counselor as an

important part of the process. They were not just seeking information, but going to talk about themselves--and you do not talk about yourself to just anyone.

It is implied that the client expects the counselor to act differently each time he/she has a different problem. The client who seeks information views the counselor as a giver of information or as a helper in locating requested materials. The client with personal problems, on the other hand, recognizes a need to talk, and to get in touch with his/her feelings. The client therefore expects to participate more, have the counselor participate less and to listen more, and to reflect on feelings.

Grater (1964) found clients who deemed counselor affective characteristics (warm, friendly, kind, accepting) more important than cognitive ones (logical, knowledgeable, efficient, poised) focused more on personal-social rather than educational-vocational problems in the first interview than did those clients favoring cognitive characteristics. This data, in conjunction with Bordin's (1955) findings, clearly shows the characteristics the counselee considers significant in the counselor are indicative of the type of problem the client will discuss.

Whalen and Flowers (1977) discovered that women sought help more for personal problems than men. Ginn (1975) found no significant differences in problem concerns of men and women over a one year span at a university counseling center, although when males and females made estimates as to what they perceived as typical problems for each sex, these perceptions showed some stereotypic bias. Women's problems were seen to be mostly concerned with physical complaints, relationships,

and emotionality, whereas men's problems were estimated to be more educationally and vocationally oriented. A study by Rice (1977), involving vocational problem focus, and client and counselor gender, revealed that when females gave the presenting problem as vocational, they discussed careers or jobs in counseling only when their counselor was a woman.

A study by Conklin and Nakoneshny (1973) involving seventy-five students from each of six Canadian schools, with a randomly selected sample of twenty-five students for each grade level seven through nine, inclusive, obtained results indicating that students see the counselor as less appropriate for personal-social concerns as they proceed from grade seven through grade nine, and more appropriate for educational-vocational concerns with each succeeding grade. As far as student's perceptions were concerned, counselors were necessary in the earlier grades for personal-social problems, but in later grades were necessary for clarification of educational-vocational problems.

Boulware and Holmes (1970) showed a preference for an older male therapist for both vocational and personal problems. Koile and Bird (1956) found that students preferred counselors of the same sex for personal and vocational problems. Jenson (1955), in describing student feeling about counseling help, stated that students went to counselors to know more about real abilities, interests, ambitions and personality. This seems to reflect the popular notion that males know more about vocational matters because they are involved in them.

There is an abundance of research literature focusing on the differential perceptions of counseling roles. Females expect the counselor to be accepting and nonjudgmental while males anticipate a

more directive, critical, and analytical counselor (Tinsley and Harris, 1976). This influences what type of presenting concern they feel free to discuss. Gamboa, Tosi, and Riccio (1976), in a study with delinquent girls, found their strongest preference for a counselor was for educational-vocational matters, with preference for help from their peers in the personal-social area. Warman (1960), in a study at University Counseling Center at Ohio State University, questioned students about how they perceived the counselor could help them. The students ranked vocational problems highest, followed by academic and personal-social problems in that order. Holman (1955) found the type of problems to be an important variable in seeking help with problems involving school and educational planning. Bratton (1972) and Grant (1954) found students saw their counselors as primarily helpful with educational-vocational problems and preferred others for personal-emotional difficulties.

Student problems appear to be influenced by age. Mezzano (1971), in his study with 1,495 students, concluded that boys and girls in grades 9 through 12, inclusive, were most concerned about their vocational and educational future. He found boys in grades seven and eight were concerned with home, family and school, and girls in those grades were most concerned about health and physical development.

Adams (1964) had a questionnaire administered by teachers to some 4,000 boys and girls aged 10 to 19 from over 30 schools. The questionnaire asked students to identify their biggest personal problem, to hypothesize how to solve it, to identify the biggest problem of their peers, and to hypothesize as to how it could be solved.

Results showed boys to report more financial and school problems than girls, while girls related more interpersonal and family problems. Both saw their peers as having fewer school problems and more interpersonal problems than they reported for themselves.

Indications are that problem type may greatly affect the way the counselors respond to a client. Melnick (1975) found that counselors were rated as having higher empathy, respect, genuineness, affective responses, and exploratory responses for personal-social problems than vocational-educational problems. Hill et al. (1977) supported Melnick's results in a study involving eighty-eight male and female counselors who viewed videotaped vignettes of two thirty-five year old women and two twenty year old women who portrayed problems about feared rape, existential anxiety, and choice of a college major in social work, or a college major in engineering. The two women concerned with personal-social problems were considered as having more serious problems and also received more empathy than the two women concerned with vocational-educational concerns.

Sexual bias, whether displayed knowingly or not, is reflected by counselor attitude in counseling behavior, and through their use of materials (Schlossberg and Pietrofesa, 1973). Thus it influences the decision making attitudes of female clients toward traditional-bound educational and career choices (Smith, M. R. J., 1973). Friedersdorf (1970) explored the relationship between male and female secondary school counselor attitudes toward the career planning of high school females. The subjects were 106 counselors in Indiana schools. Twenty-seven male and twenty-nine female counselors role-played a college-

bound high school girl, while twenty-three male and twenty-seven female counselors role-played a non-college bound high school girl. The Strong Vocational Interest Blank for women was completed. The following conclusions were drawn: (1) Male and female counselors responded differently when role-playing a college-bound high school girl versus role-playing as a non-college-bound high school girl; (2) Counselors perceived college-bound high school girls as identifying with cultural activities and skills involving verbal ability; (3) Items which reflected differences between college-bound versus non-college-bound girls were not the same; (4) Male and female counselors have at least some relatively distinctive attitudes toward which levels and types of occupations are realistic and appropriate for both college-bound and non-college-bound girls; (5) Male counselors associated college-bound girls with traditionally feminine occupations at the semi-skilled level; female counselors perceived the college-bound girl as interested in occupations requiring a college education; (6) Male counselors tended to think of women in feminine roles characterized by feminine personality traits; (7) Female counselors tended to expand the traditional images of female work roles and projected women's roles into careers presently occupied; (8) Male counselors perceived a college-bound girl as having positive attitudes toward traditionally feminine occupations regardless of the classification level of the occupations. Occupations traditionally engaged in by men were not considered by male counselors as occupations that college-bound girls would like as careers. The implication, obviously, is that some of the counselor attitudes reflected might have great impact

on the goals of the female clients as expressed in the counseling sessions.

Such differing perceptions by male and female counselors of women's occupational roles may affect the higher educational and vocational goals of the female student. Careers are most psychologically central for the masculine sex (Patterson, 1973). He stated that:

> By the time girls reach secondary school, where most vocational counseling begins, they have usually become predisposed to enculturation to express the "feminine core" personality at the expense of effective planning encompassing both sex role and the competitive achievement role (p. 269).

Moreover, because of the negative attitude of men toward employment of women, many counselors are not informed about the potential areas of employment for women. Bingham and House (1973) found in their sample survey of secondary counselors in New Jersey that their expectation that counselors would be accurately informed in terms of factual data related to the employment of women was not realized. This sex-bias and stereotyping of occupations may be reflected by counselor attitude in the counseling interaction. Goals of the counselor who is unaware of the changing opportunities for women may continue to reflect sexist values (Gardner, 1971). That this is changing, however, due to the impact of the feminist movement is reflected in the Price and Borgers study (1977) evaluating the sex-stereotyping effect as related to counselor perceptions of courses appropriate for high school students. They found no significant difference in the ratings of appropriateness of course for ninety-six randomly selected students by male and female counselors. This

is important since it gives reliability to counselors' similarity of perception, and of their ability to differentiate on the basis of information given.

In summary, the research literature is replete with data supporting a preference by students to discuss vocational-educational and future plans with male counselors and a reluctance to do so for personal and social concerns. The area of concern, moreover, appears to be somewhat dependent on age. The literature also reflects the differential expectations by the client and counselor in the counseling relationship. Restrictions of this interaction are placed on both the client and the counselor in the vocational and educational exploration of occupational information by sex-role stereotyping and sex-role bias.

Self-Esteem and Sex-Role Conditioning

The importance of constructs such as self-concept and self-esteem is exemplified by the central role that is accorded to them by personality theorists (Turkat, 1978). Epstein (1973) contends that the self-concept is a self-theory whose fundamental purpose is to optimize the pleasure-pain balance of the individual over the course of a lifetime. He affirms that two other basic functions of self-theory are to facilitate the maintenance of self-esteem, and to organize the data of experience in a manner that can be coped with effectively. Babladeis (1978), in a study of sex-role concepts and flexibility on measures of thinking, feeling, and behaving, discerned distinctive differences between males and females which

necessarily indicated that the self-concept includes notions about one's sex-role identity.

Self-esteem in self-theory has been called by many names. The same term may take on a widely different meaning depending on the theorist, while an assortment of names may be used to refer to apparently the same construct (Wells and Marwell, 1976). A sample of such related terms are self-love, self-confidence, self-respect, self-acceptance, self-satisfaction, self-evaluation, self-appraisal, self-worth, self-regard, sense of adequacy or personal efficacy, sense of competence, self-ideal congruence, ego or ego strength. All of these terms describe self-evaluation or self-affection, or a combination of the two.

Wylie (1961; 1974) used the term self-regard for self-esteem in her review of the measures of the self-concept. However, self-esteem is more frequently used to denote both the conceptualization of and measurement of the self-regard (Wells & Marwell, 1976).

Feelings of personal worth are influenced by the judgment of significant others. These significant others change from time to time. During adolescence, peer approval exerts great pressure to conform to socially acceptable roles. Jones et al. (1978) stated: "Thus the important issue becomes not whether one has internalized the traits and behaviors appropriate to one's gender but the extent to which one has assimilated the tendencies most valued by society" (p. 311).

Moreover, it is socially desirable to be held in high esteem and such esteem may in turn be generated by social reinforcement (Robinson & Shaver, 1974). Conversely, to be held in low esteem

by significant others may generate feelings of low esteem and, consequently, give rise to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Characteristics of high-and-low-esteem vary. High self-esteem individuals perceive themselves as competent, need-satisfying decision makers (Barrett & Tinsley, 1976). They tend to be more internally oriented (Fish & Karabenick, 1971; Prawat, 1976; Ziller, Hagey, Smith & Long, 1969) and tend to use avoidance or denial systems which allow them to maintain a high self-evaluation (Wells & Marwell, 1976). Low-esteem individuals perceive themselves as incompetent and unworthy. They use projective or expressive defenses and therefore are more dependent upon situations and events (Wells & Marwell, 1976). Low-esteem individuals appear to be highly susceptible to persuasability (Wylie, 1961) since they have a strong desire for social acceptance. However, a 1977 study by Maile refutes this finding.

There appears to be a body of research correlating level of self-esteem to sex. Male self-esteem has been discerned to be higher than female self-esteem among older children of the pre-adolescent population (Fein, O'Neill, Frank & Velit, 1975). Reading achievement, moreover, was found to have high correlation with the level of self-esteem in boys in all age groups. Their study also showed that individual self-esteem items that showed sex differences in responses were sex-role related.

Durley (1974), in a study of black students analyzing self-esteem by grade level and sex in the East Aurora School District, Illinois, found there was no statistical difference in self-esteem based on sex. There was, however, a difference in the level of self-esteem based on grade level with black male elementary school

students scoring higher than their female counterparts. Conversely, Kimball (1973), using the Coopersmith SEI as a measure, found no significant differences in SEI scores over grades for males or females or for both sexes combined, but when all grades were combined, a significant difference was found with girls scoring higher on self-esteem. Render (1974) also found sex to be related to self-regard, with females scoring higher than males.

Prawat (1976) and Edeburn (1974) found that neither grade nor sex was a significant source of variance for self-esteem or self-acceptance.

Norem-Hebeisen (1976) contended that multiple dimensions underlie self-esteem. These include basic acceptance, real-ideal congruence, and self-evaluation. His study revealed higher self-esteem on some clusters among females and older males. On the other hand Broverman et al. (1972) and Tolor, Kelly and Stebbins (1976) disclosed that women tend to have more negative self-concepts than men, which would appear to negate this idea. Bem (1975) stated that high femininity in females consistently correlates with high anxiety, low self-esteem and low self-acceptance.

Self-esteem is also influenced by situations and role expectations (King, 1976). Helland (1973), in a study investigating the sex-role correlates of adolescent self-esteem, stressed that research in self-esteem has been hampered by difficulty in obtaining a representative sample and analytical tools which allow for the complicated patterns of interaction. His study attempted to minimize these problems. He suggested that self-esteem for boys during adolescence is more

related to his achievement oriented activities (i.e., his ability to play football), than to his socially related activities (i.e., dancing with girls). The reverse of the suggestion was expected for girls. For boys the variables most strongly related to self-esteem were school grades, job aspirations and job experience. For girls the variables with the strongest relations were number of dates, dating problems and the number of close friends. Results for girls reflected some sex-role confusion as to achievement-oriented variables.

The correlation of self-esteem to counseling goals is dealt with in various ways in the literature. Rogers' (1951) self-theory relies heavily upon the concept of self as an explanatory construct. The important self-esteem concept is that of self-acceptance. Wells and Marwell (1976) stressed that during the 1950's the term self-acceptance was widely used for self-feeling, but it has recently been replaced by self-esteem.

Miller (1977) conducted an exploratory investigation comparing self-esteem to self-acceptance in reducing social-evaluative anxiety experienced by college students. He found the difference to be that self-esteem denotes positive self-regard, and that self-acceptance denotes unconditional regard. His conclusion was that the outcome of psychotherapy should be for the client to reach the level of unconditional regard.

Murthy and Botkawar (1978), of the All-India Institute of Mental Health, studied the relationship between self-acceptance and adjustment in Indian subjects. Their findings agreed with western hemispheric studies that showed that as the degree of self-ideal

discrepancy increased, so did the degree of maladjustment, thus indicating that self-acceptance or self-esteem is low in maladjusted individuals.

Freeman and Stormes (1977), as a result of their study of the effects of subject and sex of interpreter on responses to negative feedback, offered the suggestion that if a change in a client's self-concept is desired, the likelihood of achieving this goal is enhanced by utilizing a same-sexed counselor. This was also acknowledged by Schwarzwald, Kavish, Shoham and Waysman (1977), who discerned in a study of fear and sex similarity as determinants of personal space, that the opposite sex serves as a self-evaluation reference point.

In summary, the literature concerning self-esteem shows it occupies a prominent place in self-theory. There appears, however, to be a lack of a clear-cut definition of self-esteem and due to this lack of conceptual explicitness, research findings are confusing. In addition, self-esteem measurement, because of its dependence on self-report evaluations, is greatly influenced by social desirability.

Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory: A Description and Critique

Self-esteem, according to Coopersmith (1967), is one of the most difficult and provocative personality characteristics. He defines it as:

> . . . the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself; it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy (p. 4).

It is within the context of this definition that "self-concept" and "self-esteem" are often used interchangeably.

Coopersmith's SEI Form A (1967) requests the subjects to respond to fifty-eight items by checking the category "like me" or "not like me." Eight items constitute a "lie scale." The original pool of items was drawn from Rogers and Dymond's 1954 instrument and original research (Robinson & Shaver, 1974). Five psychologists classified the items as indicative of high or low esteem. Responses indicative of positive self-esteem receive two points; thus, the inventory is scored in the direction of high self-esteem. Total scores may range from zero to one hundred points.

The instrument aims to measure the respondent's self-attitudes in four areas: peers, parents, school and personal interests. The scale was initially developed to test pre-adolescents and adolescents (Coopersmith, 1959). A "lie scale" was added to assess extremely socialized responses and constitutes a fifth scale.

The SEI was developed on the basis of the results of 1,748 public school children in Connecticut who were administered this instrument. The mean and standard deviation for the boys (70.1 and 13.8, respectively), was not significantly different from that found for the girls (72.2 and 12.8, respectively). Coopersmith obtained a five week test-retest reliability coefficient of .88, and .70 over a three year period.

Construct validity of the scale is suggested by the positive correlations with teachers' ratings of adjustment, sociogram ratings, and inverse correlations with measures of anxiety (Coopersmith, 1967).

There are three forms of the SEI. Form A contains fifty-eight items, eight of which comprise the "lie scale." Form B is briefer,

consisting of twenty-five items, and does not permit differentiation into subscales as does Form A. Forms A and B correlated .86 on four different samples. Form C is equated to Form A, but is for use with adults. The correlation of total scores of Form A and C exceeds .80 on three samples.

The original SEI (Form A) was used on a group basis with populations ranging from age nine to adult level. The three forms are used for males and females. In most studies there are no significant differences between the esteem level of males and females.

Coopersmith states there are no exact criteria for high, medium and low self-esteem. This criteria will vary with the sample and distribution. However, he used indications of high self-esteem as scores in the upper quartile, scores in the lower quartile indicate low esteem, and the interquartile range scores are indicative of medium esteem.

Norms are stated for the preadolescent population (nine to fifteen, inclusive) as 70.1 for females and 72.2 for males and for young adults (sixteen to twenty-three, inclusive) as 76.1.

The form is self-administering and takes about twelve minutes to complete. According to the manual (Coopersmith, 1975), it has been administered to over 40,000 children and adults in the past five years. The subjects included both adults and children ranging across the entire socio-economic range and included members of many ethnic and subculture groups (i.e., Blacks, Chicanos, Indians, and Puerto Ricans).

The manual (Coopersmith, 1975) includes a summarization of norms that have been reported by various investigators. Their findings reveal: (1) There is no evidence indicating a need for a separation of norms for

each grade; (2) Males tend to score higher than females, but there is no significant difference between sexes; (3) No significant or meaningful differences between SEI scores of sex and ethnic groups are indicated; (4) SEI scores increase slightly and monotonically with grade level.

According to the manual (Coopersmith, 1975), Kokones in 1973 performed factor analyses of the SEI responses of 7,600 children (grades 4 to 8, inclusive) ranging across the socio-economic range. It is reported that there was little factorial difference of this population from grade level to grade level. There were some differences related to sex: Seventh grade boys appeared to derive little self-esteem from their relations with peers, while females at all levels were more likely to report limited esteem from their academic activities.

Simon and Bernstein (1971) used the SEI to correlate perceived reciprocal liking. Their study consisted of 129 6th grade chidren, ages 11 or 12, attending a suburban school. Findings showed persons with high-esteem are more likely to believe that people they like reciprocate their positive feelings. Children with low self-esteem are much less likely to hold that belief.

Fullerton (1973), using a population of 104 boys and girls in grades 5 and 6 of middle class background and mentally gifted (IQ= 130+), examined the relationships between self-esteem, self-disclosure and risk taking. For each construct self-ratings and behavioral observations were obtained. He used the SEI, and findings showed substantial support for the convergent validity and discriminant validity of the instrument.

Positive points of the instrument are that it has the potential to measure sub-areas of esteem (such as peer, or parent). Coopersmith (1967) provides much validation. The negative points are that high correlation with social desirability responses must be considered a problem. However, the "lie scale" partially offsets this problem.

Robinson and Shaver (1974) deemed it as one of the best scales specifically designed to measure self-esteem. They affirmed as did Wylie (1974), that the SEI provides more validation than exists for many scales. Robert Sears (1969) has also lent strong support to the value of this instrument by offering the view that Coopersmith has gone beyond others in constructing a model for the measurement of self-esteem.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Subjects

The subjects of this study consisted of 375 students, which included 189 males and 186 females enrolled in junior-senior high school in a rural community in Northcentral Minnesota. The subjects were in grades seven through twelve, inclusive, and ranged in age from twelve through eighteen (Appendix A). The sample size for each grade level ranged from a minimum of sixty to a maximum of sixty-nine.

Instruments

Personal Data Questionnaire

The questionnaire (Appendix B) consisted of two sections: (1) General information; and (2) Concern areas to indicate counselor preference. The general information section asked three questions: the grade, age and sex of the respondent. The second section ascertained whether the respondent would choose a male or a female counselor for each of the seven concern areas: (1) Health and Physical Development; (2) School; (3) Home and Family; (4) Boy and Girl Relationships; (5) Vocational and Educational; (6) Moral and Religious; and (7) Personal-Social. The questionnaire required about five to eight minutes to complete.

Measure of Self-Esteem

The Coopersmith SEI was utilized to evaluate the self-perceptions of the subjects in the study (Appendix C). On this scale the students are asked to respond to fifty-eight items by checking the category "like me" or "not like me." Eight items comprise a "lie scale." Responses indicative of positive self-esteem receive two points. Total scores may range from zero to one hundred points.

This scale measures evaluative attitudes toward the self in social, academic, family and personal areas of experience. The scale was originally devised for use with children, although it has been used with age ranges from eight to adult.

A test-retest reliability for this instrument was reported by Coopersmith as .88 over 5 weeks, and .70 over 3 years (Coopersmith, 1967).

Construct validity of the scale is suggested by positive correlations with teachers' ratings of adjustment, sociogram ratings and inverse correlations with measures of anxiety (Coopersmith, 1967). Further evidence of the scale's validity on similar measures is offered by its correlation of .42 to .66 with the scales of the California Personality Inventory, .60 with a derived picture test, and .46 with the Bills scale (Robinson & Shaver, 1974).

The inventory takes about twelve minutes to complete.

Procedure

The Personal Data Questionnaire and the Coopersmith SEI were administered to the junior-senior high school students in randomly selected home rooms during regularly scheduled class periods. Home room teachers, an equal number of male and female for each grade level, administered the two instruments. To preserve anonymity, no identification by either respondent's name or home room teacher's name was made.

The teachers were acquainted with the purpose of the study. They were asked to read the instructions (Appendix D) to the students in their entirety in order to make the student responses as bias-free as possible.

Students were told by the teachers that the questionnaire and inventory were part of a study of student attitudes and preferences and as such should be completed as honestly and truthfully as possible. The subjects were informed that there were no "right" or "wrong" answers, in the usual sense, and that they were to answer strictly in terms of their own beliefs and experiences. Twenty-five minutes were allowed to collect the data. Questions of and assistance by the teacher were permitted at any time during the administration of the instruments.

The Personal Data Questionnaire asked the respondent to check his/her grade level and age, to circle his/her sex and to circle the preference for a male counselor or female counselor for the concern areas. The SEI scale was marked by a (√) in the appropriate column indicating that the statement is "like" or "unlike" the respondent.

All of the answers from the SEI and the Personal Data Questionnaire were entered on the instruments.

Research Design and Statistical Procedure

This study was an ex post facto study, as defined by Kerlinger (1973). Within the investigation the independent variables were: (1) the sex of the respondent; (2) the grade level of the respondent; and (3) the self-esteem score of the respondent. The dependent variable was the preference for a male or female counselor by type of presenting concern.

Sources of the Data

There were two sources of the data for the present study: (1) the Personal Data Questionnaire; and (2) the Coopersmith SEI. Tabulation of the information, as well as the scoring of the SEI, was done by hand.

Statistical Procedures

Multiple regression analysis was used to test the first three research hypotheses involving preferences for a male or a female counselor by type of presenting concern as related to the sex, grade level and the self-esteem of the student-counselee. Chi square was also applied to the data of counselor preferences for each type of presenting concern to determine where significant differences existed. Canonical correlation was used to test the fourth hypothesis concerning the relationship of the two sets of variables. The .05 level of confidence was established for testing the statistical significance of the data relating to each of the hypotheses.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The analysis and results of this study are presented in the order of the research hypotheses proposed in Chapter I.

Analysis of Student-Counselee Preferences for Sex of the Counselor

Null Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the preference for a male or a female counselor by type of presenting concern and the sex of the student-counselee.

To test this hypothesis, multiple regression analysis was used and Table 1 reflects these findings.

TABLE 1

MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF STUDENT-COUNSELEE PREFERENCES FOR MALE AND FEMALE COUNSELORS ACCORDING TO PRESENTING CONCERN (N=375)

Analysis of Variance	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	R	F
Areas of Concern	7	46.559	6.651	.705	51.734[a]
Within Subjects	367	47.184	0.129		

[a] $p < .05$

The F value of 51.734 exceeded the .05 level of significance and the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the preference for a male or a female counselor by type of presenting concern and the sex of the student-counselee.

The regression was further analyzed to determine where the significant differences existed. Chi square was applied to the data for each of the presenting concerns. Table 2 reflects the chi square for each of the presenting concerns.

Results of the chi square analysis indicated an overall preference for female counselors for health-physical, home-family, boy-girl, moral-religious and personal-social concerns. The preference in the health-physical concern area indicated an overwhelming preference by female student-counselees for female counselors while the male preferences were split--with approximately one-third of the males preferring female counselors and the remaining two-thirds preferring males. The preference for a male counselor was for school and vocational-educational concerns. In the moral-religious concern area the preferences were almost equally distributed by male student-counselees between male and female counselors.

Six of the seven chi squares showed a significant proportional difference of males and females who chose either a male or a female counselor. On the chi square for school concerns there were no significant differences in the choices of male or female counselors.

TABLE 2

CHI SQUARE TABLE OF PREFERENCES FOR MALE AND FEMALE COUNSELORS (N=375)

Areas of Concern	Male Student-Counselee	Female Student-Counselee	χ^2
Health-Physical			160.555[a]
Male Counselor	120	3	
Female Counselor	69	183	
School			.299
Male Counselor	128	120	
Female Counselor	61	66	
Home-Family			6.628[a]
Male Counselor	63	39	
Female Counselor	126	147	
Boy-Girl			68.485[a]
Male Counselor	107	28	
Female Counselor	82	158	
Vocational-Educational			25.417[a]
Male Counselor	170	127	
Female Counselor	19	59	
Moral-Religious			3.814[a]
Male Counselor	98	78	
Female Counselor	91	108	
Personal-Social			39.645[a]
Male Counselor	100	39	
Female Counselor	89	147	

[a] $p < .05$

Analysis of Student-Counselee Grade Level as Related to Counselor Sex

Null Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between the preference for a male or a female counselor by type of presenting concern and the grade level of the student-counselee.

The preference for a male or a female counselor for the types of presenting concerns were correlated with the grade level of the student-counselee. Multiple regression analysis was used. Table 3 shows these findings.

TABLE 3

MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF GRADE LEVEL PREFERENCES (N=375)

Analysis of Variance	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	R	F
Grade Level	7	24.587	3.512	.148	1.174
Within Subjects	367	1097.562	2.990		

The overall F test of 1.174 did not approach the required level of significance to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

There was no signficant relationship between the preference for a male or a female counselor by type of presenting concern and the grade level of the student-counselee. In Table 4 the data showed that there was a preference for a female counselor for all of the concern areas across grade level, except in the school and vocational concern areas, where a male counselor was preferred.

Analysis of Student-Counselee Self-Esteem as Related to Counselor Sex

Null Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between the preferences for a male or female counselor when presenting concern and the level

TABLE 4

CONCERN AREA AND COUNSELOR PREFERENCE BY GRADE LEVEL
(N=375)

Grade	7	8	9	10	11	12
			Health-Physical			
Male Counselor	22	24	24	12	19	22
Female Counselor	47	40	36	48	42	39
			School			
Male Counselor	38	45	37	45	46	37
Female Counselor	31	19	23	15	15	24
			Home-Family			
Male Counselor	17	17	17	16	16	19
Female Counselor	52	47	43	44	45	42
			Boy-Girl			
Male Counselor	25	24	24	21	22	19
Female Counselor	44	40	36	39	39	42
			Vocational-Education			
Male Counselor	48	51	48	49	55	46
Female Counselor	21	13	12	11	6	15
			Moral-Religious			
Male Counselor	24	32	24	34	30	32
Female Counselor	45	32	36	26	31	29
			Personal-Social			
Male Counselor	19	26	24	20	26	24
Female Counselor	50	38	36	40	35	37

of self-esteem of the student-counselee are considered.

To test the hypothesis a multiple regression was used and Table 5 presents these findings.

TABLE 5

MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF SELF-ESTEEM AS RELATED TO COUNSELOR PREFERENCES (N=375)

Analysis of Variance	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	R	F
Self-Esteem	7	1182.931	168.990	.118	.745
Within Subjects	367	83192.492	226.682		

The F value of .745 did not approach the probability needed to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between the preference for a male or a female counselor when type of presenting concern and the self-esteem of the student-counselee are considered. Table 6 presents the self-esteem scores by sex and grade level. An examination of this table shows no difference between males and females on self-esteem. A further examination of the data indicates higher mean self-esteem scores in grades seven and nine and lower mean scores in grades eight and ten. However, none of these mean scores by grade level or between males and females are significant.

TABLE 6

SELF-ESTEEM SCORES BY GRADE BY SEX (N=375)

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Grade 7	67.391	14.770
Male	66.722	14.729
Female	68.121	15.008
Grade 8	63.750	14.229
Male	64.375	12.315
Female	63.125	15.780
Grade 9	66.866	16.423
Male	69.467	17.324
Female	64.267	15.320
Grade 10	64.667	15.372
Male	63.241	12.631
Female	66.000	17.664
Grade 11	65.967	15.234
Male	65.677	17.657
Female	66.267	12.548
Grade 12	65.705	14.384
Male	65.549	14.083
Female	65.867	14.930
For All Males	65.862	14.910
For All Females	65.624	15.175
For Total Population	65.744	15.020

Canonical Correlation Analysis of Student-Counselee Characteristics and Counselor Sex

Null Hypothesis 4

There are no significant relationships between the first set of variables measuring student-counselee presenting concerns and the second

set of variables of student counselee sex, grade level, age and self-esteem.

To test this hypothesis, a canonical correlation analysis was computed. These findings are reflected in Table 7 and indicate that there were four canonical correlations produced. Only the first canonical correlation was significant and indicated that about fifty per cent of the total variance of the two sets was shared by the first canonical variates. None of the other three canonical correlations produced shared more than three per cent of the variance of the two sets of variables. The canonical variate produced showed that health-physical concerns from the first set and sex of student-counselee from the second set of variables loaded high on this variate.

The results of this canonical correlation analysis indicated a significant relationship between the two sets of variables and the null hypothesis of no relationship was rejected.

Pearson correlation coefficients for student-counselee characteristics and concerns are presented in Table 8. Significant correlation coefficients were recorded between student-counselee age and grade level, between student-counselee age and boy-girl and vocational-educational concerns and between sex and health-physical, boy-girl, vocational-educational and personal-social concerns. None of the factors were related to student-counselee self-esteem. Several of the student-counselee concerns were interrelated.

TABLE 7

CANONICAL CORRELATION ANALYSIS OF STUDENT-COUNSELEE CHARACTERISTICS AND COUNSELOR PREFERENCES BY TYPE OF PRESENTING CONCERN (N=375)

Number	Eigen Value	Canonical Correlation	Chi Square	DF	Significance
1	.497	.705	267.859	28	.000[a]
2	.022	.150	14.790	18	.676
3	.015	.122	6.436	10	.777
4	.002	.050	.909	4	.923

COEFFICIENTS FOR CANONICAL VARIABLES OF THE FIRST SET

	CONVAR 1
Health-Physical	.792
School	.024
Home-Family	.079
Boy-Girl	.284
Vocational-Educational	.200
Moral-Religious	.044
Personal-Social	.041

COEFFICIENTS FOR CANONICAL VARIABLES OF THE SECOND SET

	CONVAR 1
Grade	.116
Age	-.124
Sex	.999
Esteem	-.003

[a] $p < .05$

TABLE 8

PEARSON CORRELATIONS (N=375)

	Grade	Age	Sex	Health-Physical	School	Home-Family	Boy-Girl	Voc.-Educ.	Moral-Relig.	Pers. Social
Grade										
Age	.960[a]									
Sex	.007	.009								
Health-Physical	.018	.010	.659[a]							
School	-.063	.059	.034	-.076						
Home-Family	.033	.030	.139	.224[a]	.070					
Boy-Girl	.034	.378[a]	.433[a]	.387[a]	.055	.203[a]				
Voc.-Educ.	.079	.733[a]	.267[a]	.176	.286[a]	.077	.097			
Moral-Relig.	.103	.102	.099	.060	.278[a]	.230[a]	.085	.166		
Pers.-Social	.063	.071	.331[a]	.392[a]	.153	.325[a]	.345[a]	.189	.130	
Esteem	.015	.019	.008	.267	.037	.061	.057	.031	.029	.026

[a] $p < .05$

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the variables of student-counselee sex, grade level, and self-esteem and the preference for a male or a female counselor by type of presenting concern. This study was undertaken to provide basic information about the preferences of high school students in view of the increased awareness of sex-role conditioning, sex-role bias, and sex-role standards.

The following four research hypotheses were proposed:

1. There is no significant difference in the preference for a male or a female counselor by type of presenting concern and the sex of the student-counselee.

2. There is no significant relationship between the preference for a male or a female counselor by type of presenting concern and the grade level of the student-counselee.

3. There is no significant relationship between the preference for a male or a female counselor when type of presenting concern and the self-esteem of the student-counselee are considered.

4. There are no significant relationships between the first set of variables measuring student-counselee presenting concerns and

the second set of variables of student-counselee sex, grade level, age and self-esteem.

The research sample which comprised the study was composed of 375 high school students, aged twelve to eighteen, from a rural community in Northcentral Minnesota. There were 189 males and 186 females who were in grades 7 through 12, inclusive, with a minimum of 60 students and maximum of 69 students from each grade level.

The instruments used in this study were a personal data questionnaire and the Coopersmith SEI. The personal data questionnaire provided information about the student's grade, age, and sex and ascertained preference for a male or female counselor for several types of presenting concerns.

Analysis of the data was accomplished through multiple regression analysis, chi square, and canonical correlation. The findings of the study follow.

1. There was a significant difference in the preference for a male or a female counselor by type of presenting concern and the sex of the student-counselee. A preference existed for a female counselor by both sexes for the concern areas of health-physical, home-school, boy-girl, moral-religious and personal-social, while a preference existed for a male counselor for the school and vocational-educational concern areas. Significant proportional differences of males and females in counselor choice existed in all concern areas except for the school concern area where no significant difference was found.

2. There was no significant relationship between the preference for a male or a female counselor by type of presenting concern and the grade level of the student-counselee.

3. There was no significant relationship between the preference for a male or a female counselor when type of presenting concern and the self-esteem of the student-counselee were considered.

4. There were significant relationships between the first set of variables measuring student-counselee presenting concerns and the second set of variables of student-counselee sex, grade level, age and self-esteem. Health-physical concerns from the first set and sex from the second set contributed most to the canonical correlation.

Discussion

Based on the results of this study, it is concluded that there is a preference for female counselors for all areas of personal or social concerns, and a preference for male counselors for school and vocational-educational concerns. These findings contradict the findings of Mezzano (1971).

The purpose of Mezzano's study was to discover whether clients seeking counseling had preferences regarding the sex of the counselor and whether such preferences varied with client age and presenting concern. Results showed that males preferred male counselors for areas of concern denoted as health-physical development, school, home and family, boy and girl relationships, future vocational-educational, moral and religious, and self-centered while females preferred female counselors for all concern areas. However, as the grade level increased, females showed an increased preference for male counselors for school and vocational-educational concerns.

There has been much research concerning the benefits of same-sex and opposite-sex pairings. Counselees in several earlier studies

indicated a preference for male counselors in most problem areas (Boulware & Holmes, 1970; Chesler, 1971; Christensen and Magoon, 1974). The student-counselees in the present study have shown a preference for female counselors in several problem areas. These results may indicate that perceptions of women's roles have been altered by a rising social consciousness. Perhaps female counselors are now being perceived as more capable of understanding personal and social areas of concern comprising aspects of health and physical development, home and family, boy and girl, moral and religious, and personal-social concerns.

However, it appears from the results of this study that male counselors are still perceived as more knowledgeable about academic problems and the world-of-work by both sexes. In the present study there was a tendency for the preference for a male counselor to increase with each succeeding grade level for educational and vocational, and school concerns. This finding is consistent with a study done by Conklin and Nakoneshny (1973), and also with the study done by Mezzano (1971).

The sex of the client or the counselor may not play a crucial role by itself. Neither exists in a vacuum, and the study of the effects of one must consider not only the other but also the given situation in which both are interacting. A specific sex pairing of client and counselor may be effective in one situation, while the opposite pairing may be effective in another. It appears preference for a male or a female counselor, therefore, depends on problem and topic focus of counseling. It may be that women have yet to overcome

the psychological differences still apparent in the realm of stereotyping involving cultural interpretations of masculinity and femininity. Male counselors may be preferred because of higher perceptions for males over females in areas of authority and prestige.

Although perceptions of self-esteem are greatly influenced by perceptions of sex-role stereotypes (Broverman et al., 1972; Epstein, 1976), there have been no reported studies dealing with the effects of the self-esteem on preferences for a male or a female counselor. The results of this study showed no significant differences in counselor preferences when self-esteem was considered. Male self-esteem was slightly higher, although not significantly higher than females. These results correspond with studies by Fein et al. (1975), Coopersmith (1967), and Rosenberg (1965). It is also noted that self-esteem scores were highest for seventh graders and ninth graders. Although this was not a longitudinal study, the data showed changing perceptions of self as students from elementary to junior high school (grade seven), and from junior high school to senior high school (grade nine) were compared.

Recommendations

Several recommendations are offered for further research with the hope of promoting a better understanding of preferences for male or female counselors.

1. A replication of this study is recommended using other populations (e.g., minority, racial, adult, urban) to determine if the results of the present study may be generalized.

2. It is recommended that the self-esteem variable be explored in conjunction with the preference for a male or a female counselor where students have actually made a counselor choice.

3. It is recommended that school boards hire female counselors, in appropriate numbers, in order to allow for choice by student-counselees.

APPENDIX A

GRADE AND AGE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION CHART

TABLE 9

GRADE AND AGE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION CHART
(N=375)

Grade	Frequency		Age	Frequency
7	69		12	49
8	64		13	65
9	60		14	60
10	60		15	54
11	61		16	62
12	61		17	65
	Males	189	50.4%	
	Females	186	49.6%	

APPENDIX B

PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE

PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following three questions:

1. Check your grade _____7 _____8 _____9

   _____10 _____11 _____12

2. Enter your age _____

3. Circle your sex F M

Please imagine you are in a school that has two counselors. One is a man, the other is a woman. Both are similar in age, and both work well with students. Remember, the essential difference between them is that one is a man, and the other is a woman.

Record below the one you would choose to talk to about each of the following concerns. Circle "Male Counselor" if you would rather talk to a man about the concern indicated or circle "Female Counselor" if you would rather talk to a woman about that concern.

Concern I Health and Physical Development concerns such as:

Being overweight, poor complexion or skin problem, not very attractive physically.

Male Counselor Female Counselor

Concern II School concerns such as:

Not spending enough time in study, not liking school, worrying about grades.

Male Counselor Female Counselor

Concern III Home and Family concerns such as:

Parents not understanding me, parents separated or divorced, wanting love and affection.

Male Counselor Female Counselor

Concern IV Boy and Girl relationships such as:

Not mixing well with the opposite sex, afraid of close contact with opposite sex, going with someone my family won't accept.

Male Counselor Female Counselor

Concern V Vocational and Educational concerns such as:

Wanting advice on what to do after high school, wanting to earn some of my own money, not knowing what I really want to do.

Male Counselor Female Counselor

Concern VI Moral and Religious concerns such as:

Being tempted to cheat in class, doubting the value of church and prayer, sometimes lying without meaning to.

Male Counselor Female Counselor

Concern VII Personal-Social concerns such as:

Lacking self-confidence, becoming embarrassed too easily, difficulty in developing friendships, problems in getting along with others, moodiness.

Male Counselor Female Counselor

APPENDIX C

COOPERSMITH SELF-ESTEEM INVENTORY

FORM A

COOPERSMITH SELF-ESTEEM INVENTORY

Directions

On the following pages, you will find a list of statements about feelings. If a statement describes how you usually feel, put a check (√) in the column "LIKE ME." If the statement does not describe how you usually feel, put a check (√) in the column "UNLIKE ME!"

There are no right or wrong answers.

Example:

	Like me	Unlike me
I am a hard worker	( )	( )

There are 58 statements to be answered. Begin at the top of the following page and mark every statement.

Administration time about 12 minutes.

COOPERSMITH SELF-ESTEEM INVENTORY
FORM A - 58 ITEMS

		Like Me	Unlike Me
1.	I spend a lot of time daydreaming.	( )	( )
2.	I'm pretty sure of myself.	( )	( )
3.	I often wish I were someone else.	( )	( )
4.	I'm easy to like.	( )	( )
5.	My parents and I have a lot of fun together.	( )	( )
6.	I never worry about anything.	( )	( )
7.	I find it very hard to talk in front of the class.	( )	( )
8.	I wish I were younger.	( )	( )
9.	There are lots of things I'd change about myself if I could.	( )	( )
10.	I can make up my mind without too much trouble.	( )	( )
11.	I'm a lot of fun to be with.	( )	( )
12.	I get upset easily at home.	( )	( )
13.	I always do the right thing.	( )	( )
14.	I'm proud of my school work.	( )	( )
15.	Someone always has to tell me what to do.	( )	( )
16.	It takes me a long time to get used to anything new.	( )	( )
17.	I'm often sorry for the things I do.	( )	( )
18.	I'm popular with kids my own age.	( )	( )
19.	My parents usually consider my feelings.	( )	( )
20.	I'm never unhappy.	( )	( )
21.	I'm doing the best work that I can.	( )	( )
22.	I give in easily.	( )	( )

		Like Me	Unlike Me
23.	I can usually take care of myself.	( )	( )
24.	I'm pretty happy.	( )	( )
25.	I would rather play with children younger than I am.	( )	( )
26.	My parents expect too much of me.	( )	( )
27.	I like everyone I know.	( )	( )
28.	I like to be called on in class.	( )	( )
29.	I understand myself.	( )	( )
30.	It's pretty tough to be me.	( )	( )
31.	Things are all mixed up in my life.	( )	( )
32.	Kids usually follow my ideas.	( )	( )
33.	No one pays much attention to me at home.	( )	( )
34.	I never get scolded.	( )	( )
35.	I'm not doing as well in school as I'd like to.	( )	( )
36.	I can make up my mind and stick to it.	( )	( )
37.	I really don't like being a boy-girl.	( )	( )
38.	I have a low opinion of myself.	( )	( )
39.	I don't like to be with other people.	( )	( )
40.	There are many times when I'd like to leave home.	( )	( )
41.	I'm never shy.	( )	( )
42.	I often feel upset in school.	( )	( )
43.	I often feel ashamed of myself.	( )	( )
44.	I'm not as nice looking as most people.	( )	( )
45.	If I have something to say, I usually say it.	( )	( )
46.	Kids pick on me very often.	( )	( )

		Like Me	Unlike Me
47.	My parents understand me.	( )	( )
48.	I always tell the truth.	( )	( )
49.	My teacher makes me feel I'm not good enough.	( )	( )
50.	I don't care what happens to me.	( )	( )
51.	I'm a failure.	( )	( )
52.	I get upset easily when I'm scolded.	( )	( )
53.	Most people are better liked than I am.	( )	( )
54.	I usually feel as if my parents are pushing me.	( )	( )
55.	I always know what to say to people.	( )	( )
56.	I often get discouraged at school.	( )	( )
57.	Things usually don't bother me.	( )	( )
58.	I can't be depended on.	( )	( )

APPENDIX D

DIRECTIONS FOR SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

DIRECTIONS FOR SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

Teachers:

The purpose of this survey is to discern student preferences for a male or a female counselor as they relate to sex, grade level, type of presenting concern, and the self-esteem of the student. In an attempt to make the results as bias-free as possible it is important that each of you give the same directions. Therefore, please read the following directions to the students:

> "May I have your attention, please. Today you are going to be given a questionnaire that will be used as a part of a study of student attitudes and preferences. Please answer each and every question as honestly as possible. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers in the usual sense; each answer is correct if it is true for you. No one will know how you answered because you will not be asked to indicate your name.
>
> "This survey will take about twenty-five minutes to complete. As soon as you receive the materials you may begin.
>
> "Each question area is accompanied by specific directions. However, if there are any questions at any time, please raise your hand and I will come to your desk to answer them."

When the questionnaires are completed, I will be by to pick them up from you in your classroom.

Thank you very much for your assistance in this study.

M. J. Sullivan

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REFERENCES

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